

# **Creating a Strategic Plan for the Bernards Township School District Meeting #3 – November 5, 2018**

## **District Mission Statement**

The mission of the Bernard's Township School District is to provide a superior education which results in academic excellence, responsible behavior, good citizenship and fosters social-emotional development so that ultimately each student will be able to:

- Maximize his/her potential.
- Become a contributing member of society.
- Maintain a commitment to life-long learning.
- Achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at all grade level

## **Session 3 of 3**

### **Developing a Vision for the Bernards Township School District**

On November 5, 2018 Bernards Township School District administration, staff, parents, board members and community members came together to continue the strategic planning process. The second meeting's topic focused on creating a shared vision for the Bernards Township School District.

The meeting began with welcoming remarks by the Board President. Gwen Thornton and Kathy Helewa from New Jersey School Boards Association facilitated the strategic planning process with an overview of the previous meetings and an introduction to the goal-setting exercise that the group would be undertaking.

We began the evening with a review of the strategic planning process and consensus building. Copies of the outcomes from meetings 1 & 2, along with goal areas were provided for each participant.

The activity for the November 5, 2018 meeting was to develop initiatives for each goal area. Participants selected a "goal area" of their interest and choosing.

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all consensus points are recorded and posted on the district website to share the group work during the course of the strategic planning process.

At the conclusion of Meeting #2, four goal areas emerged from the common themes identified by the group at large.

1. Developing Student Competencies
2. Developing Staff Competencies and Empowering Staff
3. Safety and Security
4. Communications and Collaboration

### **Goal Area #1: Developing Student Competencies**

#### **A. Academic Competencies: Variety of learning opportunities to include more experiential/interdisciplinary learning (differentiation, middle students, extra-curricular, STEAM, foundational skills)**

##### **Initiatives:**

1. School facilitated exposure to professions in all fields, e.g. field trips, internships. Integrate the subjects. Encourage cross discipline cooperation- STEAM/STREAM ( "r" for reading)
2. Expand curriculum G&T to the law- open to all students including new students
3. Expand AP courses to more students; provide more choices – teach the curriculum per class
4. Set up students' for success. Open up new variables to enter honors for middle students;
5. Provide training /assistance to national /international contests, research opportunities
6. Better transition between schools. Elementary to middle; middle to high school. Assign personnel and resources
7. At the Elementary schools provide more incentives- music, world language, public speaking, science fairs (i.e. coding, Mandarin)
8. Use WAMS example with tests at Ridge
9. Student evaluations of classes and staff

### **Goal Area #1: Developing Student Competencies**

#### **B. SEL Competencies and Civic Engagement (Empathy, Self-Awareness, Resilience, Ethics, etc.)**

##### **Initiatives:**

1. K-12 character education themes
2. Direct instruction of SEL & indirect instruction of SEL including transition programs (i.e., peer leaders, etc.)
3. Teach SEL roles relative to the title of teacher, parents, and students...what does it look like for each?
4. Specific campaigns to emphasize the message to parents, kids, students; consistent messaging (i.e. healthy stress)
5. Look at possible schedule opportunities to do this...health, HR periods

### **Goal Area #1: Developing Student Competencies**

#### **C. Health and Wellness (support services, stress anxiety, drugs and alcohol)**

##### **Initiatives:**

1. At RHS: ESS—need emotional supports for at-risk students at middle/elementary school
2. Continuation character education program at RHS (morning meeting, HR time, student recognition)
3. Block schedule to support health/wellness (decrease stress)
4. Increase assemblies to address drugs/alcohol (by former RHS students, parents, police, MAC, RAD) Ridge Students Against Drugs

5. Teaching coping, problem-solving, resiliency starting at elementary level
6. Later start time at RHS, WAMS (increase better sleep, research shown better performance)
7. Increase parent engagement, involvement, and education re: stress, anxiety, drugs/alcohol
8. Importance of parents as role models
9. No-homework nights—pair with local business for discounts and increase/promote quality family time
  - Ongoing SEL Learning, education, culture
  - Limit number of assessments/Homework choice for students
  - Cap on AP course offerings / # allowed
  - Reduced cell phone usage (home/school)

## **Goal Area #2: Developing Staff Competencies and Empowering Staff-Professional Development and Health and Wellness**

### **Initiatives:**

1. Implement a coaching program including technology and data coaching.
2. Design away for more time for staff  
(teachers/paraprofessionals/specialist/ICS /IS to collaborate.
3. Provide training on mindfulness in locations in school for staff to de-stress.
4. Create protocol for implementing mindfulness within the schools.

## **Goal Area #3: Safety and Security**

**A. School Culture and climate (character education, support services, tolerance, inclusiveness, digital citizenship**

**B. Facility/Procedural Improvements**

### **Initiatives:**

1. Develop a common language and theme for character development across all levels.
2. Create time for character development across all levels.
3. Infuse character development into curriculum.
4. Incorporate more mentoring opportunities.
5. Enhance climate & culture through purposeful programming\* (\* feedback from all stakeholders

## **3B. Safety and Security**

### **Facility/Procedural Improvements**

#### **Initiatives:**

1. Training staff on risk factors
2. Identify student with limited / no connections to peers or staff
3. Continue to collaborate with County on standard response protocols with first responders with a more hands-on drills and tabletop exercises.
4. Electronic access for staff to district buildings
5. Specialized staff to assist and support students and parents in a therapeutic manner and techniques.
6. Parent training on warning signs /strategies / resources
7. Increase student awareness to warning signs of peers.

8. A reporting system for student that is anonymous.

#### **Goal Area #4: Communication and Collaboration**

##### **A. Enhance overall student/staff/family relationships via communication**

###### **Initiatives:**

1. Overall communication plan for the District annually.
  - Mobile friendly communications
  - Fewer click-through
  - Google analytics (data for usage)
  - Review plan every year (communication strategy)
  - 360 survey feedback , i.e., extra-curricular, academics, anonymous in nature
  - More multi-media communications
  - K-12 consistency in communications

#### **Goal Area #4: Communication and Collaboration**

##### **B. Increase parent and community education**

###### **Initiatives:**

1. Standardization of resources
  - Consistency of sources
  - School/level
2. Prioritize informational messaging
  - Blasts vs. Friday folder
  - Efficiency—when /how?
3. Develop an all-encompassing social media platform for clarity and brevity
4. Explore ownership of communication
  - Director of Communication
  - Embed in Curriculum (Student driven) Life Skills

#### **Next Steps**

The Superintendent will develop action plans to implement the vision and goals developed in the 3D Strategic Plan. The action plans, which will cover the next 3 – 5 years, will include:

1. The actions necessary to accomplish the goals and objectives
2. Select measures for accountability
3. Resources required
4. A timeline for implementation
5. Indicators of success

All participants will be invited to attend the board meeting (TBD) when Gwen Thornton, NJSBA, Field Service Representative will present the final strategic plan, along with the action plans, to the Board of Education.

Thank you to all of the participants who gave of their time, energy and talents to contribute to the strategic plan for the Bernards Township School District! It has been a pleasure to work with you!

